

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 00020 052332Z

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION-DETENTE

1. THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL ENTITLED "THE REALITIES OF DETENTE" APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 5 TORONTO GLOBE & MAIL: "EVER SINCE IT WAS USHERED IN, WITH COMRADELY BACK-SLAPPING, BY SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY LEONID BREZHNEV AND FORMER AMERICAN PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON IN MAY, 1972, THE NOTION OF DETENTE HAS BEEN AN AMBIGUOUS ONE, ITS NUANCES SHAPED AS MUCH BY THE DEMANDS OF DOMESTIC POLITICS BOTH IN RUSSIA AND IN THE UNITED STATEW AS BY THE REALITIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE KREMLIN.

" THE AMBIGUITY HAD ITS POLITICAL USES. IN THE ELECTION YEAR OF 1972 MR. NIXON AND SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER COULD TALK MISTILY OF THE DAWNING OF ' A GENERATION OF PEACE ', PERUSADING AN ELECTORATE SICK TO DEATH OF AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM THAT, WHILE GEORGE MCGOVERN COULD TALK A GOOD LINE ON PEACE, RICHARD NIXON WAS THE MAN WHO KNOW HOW TO ACHIEVE IT.

"IF THIS RHETORIC RISHED MISLEADING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, IN FACT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WEST, INTO OVER-ESTIMATING
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 00020 052332Z

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DETENTE, WELL, THAT WOULD LOSE NO VOTES

IN 1972, AND THE FALLOUT COULD BE CLEANED UP LATER.

"BUT REGRETTABLY, FOR MR. KISSINGER AND MOR MR. NIXON'S SUCCESSOR, PRESIDENT GERALD FORD, THE FALLOUT IS PILING UP INTO A MAJOR POLITICAL HAZARD FOR THE ELECTION OF 1976.

"THE PROMISED NEW ERA OF HARMONY WAS NOT DELIVERED. THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN SHOVELLING ARMS INTO THE MIDDLE EAST, INTERVENING MASSIVELY IN ANGOLA, ATTEMPTING A TAKEOVER BY PROXY IN PORTUGAL, ADDING TO ITS ARMAMENTS, EXPANDING ITS MILITARY BASES AND DEPLOYING ITS NAVIES IN A MANNER INCREASINGLY ALARMING TO THE WEST. MEANWHILE, MOSCOW HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT IN SPITE OF THE SECURITY IT HAS GAINED IN THE DECADE THROUGH MILITARY PARITY WITH THE WEST, IN SPITE OF THE LOFTY RHETORIC OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION TROTTED OUT AT THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN SECURITY, THE KREMLIN IS AS SUSPICIOUS, AS HOSTILE AND AS REPRESSIVE AS EVER TOWARD ANY IDEAS THAT DO NOT MATCH THE DOGMAS OF ITS OWN IDEOLOGY. IT HAS SHOUTED THAT MESSAGE TO THE WORLD BY ITS HARASSMENT OF SOVIET CITIZENS WHO DARE TO SPEAK IN FAVOR OF HUMAN LIBERTY, BY ITS REFUSAL TO ALLOW ANDREI SAKHAROV TO CLAIM HIS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN OSLO.

"SO MR. FORD'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS, WHO ARE BY EXTENSION MR. KISSINGER'S OPPONENTS AS WELL, CAN NOW RUN WITH THE PUBLIC DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DETENTE. AND, FROM REPUBLICAN RONALD REAGAN TO DEMOCRAT HENRY JACKSON, WHO CALLS DETENTE A POLICY OF UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS TO THE RUSSIANS, THEY ARE MAKING THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITY. AFTER BEING OVERSOLD, DETENTE IS NOW IN DANGER OF BEING CONDEMNED FOR ITS FAILURE TO BE WHAT IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO BE.

"WHAT HAS BEEN MISSING IN THE PUBLIC RHETORIC ON DETENTE IN THE WEST IS THE RECOGNITION THAT IT COINCIDES WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT BY RUSSIA, FOR THE FIRST TIME, OF STRATEGIC PARITY WITH THE WEST. PRIVATELY AN AIDE TO MR. KISSINGER MAY ADMIT THAT, 'FOR 25 YEARS WE WERE CONTAINING A NATION THAT DIDN'T HAVE TH POWER TO THREATEN US AROUND THE WORLD, AND THEN, AROUND 1970... RUSSIA BECAME A REAL WORLD THREAT.' BUT AMERICAN MILITARY BUDGETS HAVE FOR SO MANY YEARS BEEN DEFENDED UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 00020 052332Z

WITH WARNINGS THAT THE SOVIET THREAT WAS IMMEDIATE AND GLOBAL THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY RISKY NOW TO ADMIT THAT THIS THREAT HAS UNDERGONE A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE, FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY.

"YET, IN THE EYES OF THE KISSINGER SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IN WASHINGTON, RUSSIA SEES DETENTE PRIMARILY AS RECOGNITION OF ITS NEW STATUS OF PARITY WITH THE UNITED STATES, ONE OF TWO

SUPER-POSERS THAT MUCH HENCEFORTH DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER AS
EQUALS. THUS IT IS ACCOMPANIED, ON RUSSIA'S PART, BY A NEW
ASSERTIVENESS, A NEW READINESS TO PUSH FOR GAINS IN GLOBAL
STRUGGLES FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE.

"TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC MISLED BY PROMISES OF " A GENERATION
OF PEACE , ' AND CONDITIONED TO SHRUG OFF AS CRIES
OF 'WOLF' WARNINGS OF INCREASING SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH,
THIS RUSSIAN BEHAVIOR APPEARS TO CONFLICT DIRECTLY WITH THE
COMMITMENT TO DETENTE. AND SO IT QUICKLY LEADS TO THE ASSUMP-
TION THAT DETENTE IS NOTHING MORE THAN A CONFIDENCE TRICK
DESIGNED TO LULL THE WEST INTO ACCEPTING SOVIET ADVANCES
WITHOUT RESISTANCE. "THE REALITY OF DETENTE WAS NEVER
MORE THAN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, NOT TO CALL
A TRUCE IN THEIRPOWER STRUGGLE, BUT MERELY TO SEEK MEANS OF
ENSURING THAT MISCALCULATIONS AND RASH MOVES IN THIS STRUGGLE
DO NOT GET OUT OF HAND." IT IS IRONIC THAT HENRY KISSINGER,
THE PROPHET OF REALISM AND THE DESTROYER OF SENTIMENTAL IL-
LUSIONS IN INTERNATONAL RELATIONS, SHOULD HIMSELF HAVE
CONTRIBUTED SO HEAVILY TO THE SENTIMENTAL ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE
MEANING OF DETENTE, ILLUSIONS THAT HAVE NOW PROVED TO BE
A SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS MORE MODEST REALITY."
FORDNEY

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